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IN OTHER NEWS



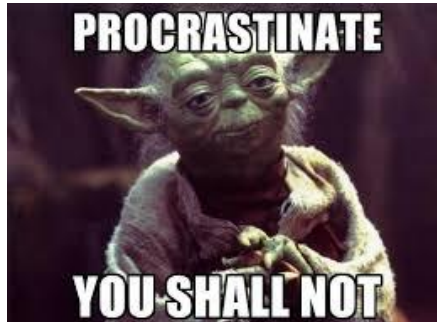
Dear Editor

You have discussed training a lot over the last few weeks and the fight to get change in the way we do things, our qualifications and our registrations and I agree with what you are saying but I feel there is something missing and that is urgency.

No one seems to realise there is a problem and that it needs to be resolved now. There is no sense of urgency and everyone seems happy to glide along.

Do you have any thoughts on this?

Substandard Plumbing Products



A couple of weeks ago we spoke about sub standard products and informed you that the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) have established a team that will look into the issues reported to them.

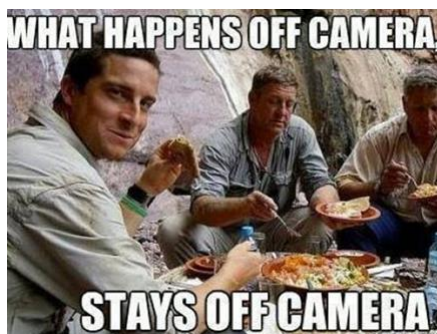
To date there have only been a couple of products identified and MBIE are wanting more people to step up and let them know of products that are thought to be substandard.

If substandard products exist, then tell MBIE about them because if you don't then it will be deemed that the problem isn't a big one and resources will be redirected to other places.

Remember MBIE have set up a direct e-mail address to the team that would look into your issues - products@mbie.govt.nz .

You have been given the opportunity to voice your concerns so make the most of it. Don't put it off until tomorrow or hope someone else does it - do it yourself NOW!!

Survival of the industry



Even the best survivalists use modern technology, yet they can survive in a variety of situations because they have knowledge, common sense and basic skills that don't rely on modern technology.

We recently talked about apprenticeships, apprentices and what we actually need as an industry. One thing we haven't looked at is how do we make our industry more attractive, how do we sex it up to entice people into the industry to ensure its survival? We don't mean just the survival of the industry, but also the skills and knowledge.

The Government and powers to be seem to concentrate on the immediate future and attempt to put the faults of the past behind

ED:

We agree totally that the sense of urgency only seems to exist from the Federation and its supporters.

This brings to mind a couple of sayings from the Army.

The first one is "Great coats on - great coats off". This is generally used when confusion or indecision abounds and someone somewhere can't decide exactly what to do.

The second saying is "Hurry up and wait". This is generally used as a sense of urgency where you get cracking, get prepared, get to where you are going and then wait for something to happen.

If you looked at the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry you would probably say we are at the "great coat on great coat off" stage where the industry doesn't know if it is hot or cold.

For instance does anyone really know where our training is taking us or if it is going to achieve its purpose in the future?

John "Lofty" Wiseman is a British author and survival consultant, and a former member of the Special Air Service (SAS) who was once

them as quick as possible while they hurtle towards the future making more mistakes. The push for technology is ever increasing and so is the reliability on it. Skills from the past are dropped for those that are reliant on technology and people's common sense and lateral thinking skills are diminished for information from the internet. Creativity is becoming a thing of the past.

Looking to the immediate future as an industry, we need to include new technology and make the most of it, but we also need to learn from the past and embrace old skills and techniques. Let's look at a simple piece of technology - the battery drill. If you took a battery drill off an apprentice they would probably stop work. Those of us that have been in the industry for 30 or so years were taught using a brace and bit, a hand drill and a ratchet screwdriver. It was nothing to drill all the holes in a newly framed house and pipe it out using hand tools and no power, and in fact it was more the norm than not.

We are not saying go back to the past in this respect but what we are saying is we should still be retaining and passing on skills from the past. What will happen in the distant future heaven forbid if something happens as predicated such as an electromagnetic wave that takes out electricity and everything computerised. This may result from an act of war or from natural events such as a comet strike - or it may never happen, but if it does what skills are going to be needed? Are all those skills and techniques based on modern technology going to be of any use or are the skills and techniques from the past going to be of more value?

Will the skills of an Information and Technology technician, a lawyer or a business graduate going to be of much use, or will the well rounded skills of a plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer win the day? As we have been saying for quite some time, the impact on society of tradespeople is way undervalued and we are looked down on by a huge proportion of the community because, as humble people, we don't advertise our status.

Natural disasters are getting worse and periods of time for help reaching people is extending. Communities are becoming reliant on the people with trade skills and a head full of common sense so why aren't we as an industry exploiting this? Why aren't we preparing for the future by teaching that which has been successful in the past? We know what works well and we know how to teach it at the moment, but looking forward what we may need to know is being lost.

Think of a person wanting to enter into the trade - are they looking to the future based on the present? Shouldn't we be encouraging people to look at the past, the present and future, and shouldn't what we are teaching in the industry support what may happen in the future. You could look around a lot of jobs in New Zealand and pick the skills that have been lost and that is lost forever. Entire industries have been lost.

In the future you will be asked to comment on our qualifications and we want you to be as well informed as possible and be able to make positive comment on what is needed. Give it some thought and let

quoted as saying:

"The secret of success is to train like it means everything when it means nothing - so you can fight like it means nothing when it means everything."

Wouldn't that be great in our industry - where we train for the worst case so that when the worst case does happen it doesn't really matter.

Dear Editor

Where does the theory that all plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers are filthy rich come from?

I've been in the industry seven years and the dude that fixes my car gets paid more than me. I hear it nearly every week "Oh you're a plumber, boy you must be rich"

I wouldn't mind if it was true.

ED:

We think it originated when plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers were held in high regard for our skills and knowledge and the fact that most in the industry had two trades.

Once upon a time people were scrambling over each other to get into our industry and our tradespeople could get

us know what you think.

In the Government we Trust?



We don't have much choice but to trust the Government and you would think those appointed would want to be remembered for doing the best they could by those they represent.

Maurice Williamson the previous Minister of Building and Construction will be remembered by some for his speech in Parliament where he referred to a big rainbow over his office, but he will be remembered by us for his negative comments about those in the industry seeking fairness and equality and for making legal that which was unlawful with regard to fees and levies taken from plumbers, gasfitters and drainlayers.

On the face of it things haven't changed much and we still seek fairness and equality in Plumbing, Gasfitting and Drainlaying regulations and legislation but we do admit that there have been minor changes, but the change hasn't come a quick as we would have liked.

The Federation is still pushing for good dialogue about our industry but getting traction is difficult as there seems to be a Government Department mentality that all trades are alike and that's what they provide their advice on. This is a difficult issue for us to deal with as these Bureaucrats are faceless and nameless but yet the Ministers rely on their advice on all things that affect us.

To us the measure of a good Minister will be if they engage with the industry and understand our issues, whilst balancing our needs against those of the Government. Simply relying on the opinion of a Bureaucrat is not going to cut it anymore. Our hope is that change can be achieved by dialogue not dictatorship.

Our industry has a wealth of knowledge and we know what is best for us but what we need is the Government to return the trust that they expect from us.

SAD NEWS

It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Warren Tilly.

Warren was a tutor at Weltec for many, many years and was a champion for apprentices. Our industry will be the poorer for his passing.

Many of those in the industry in the greater Wellington area and beyond will have benefitted from Warren's advice or guidance.

a job anywhere in the world but alas times have changed, and we have fallen into the realm of being just another trade - yet the perception is still there that we charge too much.

Perhaps its historical events or perhaps its jealousy and perhaps we will never know, but we will leave you with a parting thought:

Being a plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer is like eating a noisy packet of chips in church - everyone looks at you in disgust, but deep down inside they want to be like you.

People like Warren don't come along very often – and he has left a bit of himself in each person he came in contact with.

We think this sums Warren up nicely:

“Lives of great men all remind us

We can make our lives sublime,

And, departing leave behind us

Footprints on the sand of time”

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

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Plumbers Gasfitters and
Drainlayers Federation 6
Tacoma Drive, Totara Park,
Upper Hutt 5018 Ph (04)
5277977 Mob 0276564811 Fax
(04) 5277978
information@pgdf.co.nz